

VOTING CONVENIENCE CENTERS



*Initial Proposal:
Advancing the Election Day Voting Experience*

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Introduction

The primary responsibility of the County Clerk's *Bureau of Elections* (BOE) division is to administer fair, efficient, transparent and cost effective elections for Bernalillo County residents and voters. Under the leadership of the County Clerk, BOE consistently meets the changing demands of the electoral process while minimizing costs to the taxpayer.

Over the last decade the process for casting a ballot in Bernalillo County has evolved significantly from a practice once focused almost exclusively on Election Day, to an election system that gives the voter the power to choose when and how to vote. Early and absentee voting have become increasingly popular in recent years. For the 2008 General Election, more than 70% of the electorate chose absentee or early voting over traditional Election Day voting (Figure 1). In response, the Clerk's Office now offers seventeen regular early voting locations and recently introduced on-demand balloting. Such advancements have provided greater choice to the voter and reduced costs to the taxpayer.

Figure 1. 2008 General Election % Turnout by Method of Voting

Absentee	27.1%
Early Voting	44.2%
Election Day	28.7%

For future elections, the Bureau of Elections proposes advancing Election Day voting with the same goal of promoting convenience, transparency and cost effectiveness. This document presents the concept of the **Voting Convenience Center (VCC)** as a key advancement for Election Day voting. The VCC model promises to enhance the voter experience by providing more choice and greater convenience to voters wanting to cast their vote on Election Day. Additionally, the VCC model aims to make future elections more cost effective to the taxpayer.

Defining Voting Convenience Centers

A true appreciation of the advantages of Voting Convenience Centers (VCCs) requires a review of the limitations of the *current Election Day voting model*. The more familiar current model involves providing one polling location for every voting precinct in the county. For Bernalillo this amounts to 441 precincts after accounting for recent precinct splits prompted by 2010 Census figures. New Mexico State Statute allows for up to four precincts, where appropriate, to co-locate at one polling site, which translates into 172 separate polling sites for

Bernalillo County. In this model, registered voters must report to their assigned precinct in order to receive the proper pre-printed paper ballot containing the unique combination of races consistent with the voter's record of registration. Voters reporting to the wrong polling location are given the option of reporting to their assigned location or voting on a provisional ballot. In this current model, allowing only *closed, precinct-specific polling locations*, voter choice and convenience is limited.

The *Voting Convenience Center (VCC)* model is an alternative method for administering Election Day voting that relies on *open, non-precinct based polling locations*. VCC locations are larger in size but fewer in number than current precinct based voting locations and are typically more centrally-located near population centers. Registered county voters are not required to vote at an assigned location and instead have the option to vote at any one of up to sixty-five VCCs within Bernalillo County. The VCC model provides enhanced convenience and choice for Election Day voters. As opposed to the current model, there is no wrong place to vote with Voting Convenience Centers.

The Voting Convenience Center (VCC) model is an alternative method for administering Election Day voting that relies on open, non-precinct based polling locations.

VCC locations are networked to a **secure electronic roster (ePollBook)** of Bernalillo County registered voters. The secure network ensures all voter activity is updated in real-time across the jurisdiction. Instead of issuing a pre-printed paper ballot as required in the *current* model, VCC locations will feature a **Ballot on Demand (BOD) system** where the proper ballot is printed for every voter arriving at a VCC regardless of where the voter is registered. The VCC model, by incorporating an electronic pollbook and a ballot on demand printing system, is simply an extension of early voting technologies already practiced by Bernalillo County in the 2010 election cycle. VCCs, in effect, extend to Election Day the same conveniences and voter choice already enjoyed by early voters.

History of the VCC Model

The Voting Convenience Center model first emerged in 2003 as a response to increased accessibility requirements of the 2002 Help America Vote Act (HAVA). First implemented in Larimer County, Colorado, the VCC model sought to control the increasing costs associated with HAVA compliance while meeting voter demands for greater convenience in voting.

Since the 2003 Larimer experiment, several more counties in Colorado, as well as jurisdictions in California, Indiana, Tennessee, and Texas have all successfully implemented similar VCC models. Studies of these early adopters indicate that VCCs provide enhanced voter experience through greater choice and convenience in Election Day voting. The positive

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outcomes have signaled other jurisdictions to consider VCC models in upcoming elections. Clerks in Arapahoe County, Colorado, the City of Phoenix, and Travis County, Texas (Austin) are just a few election officials looking to realize the advantages of greater voter convenience. Voting Convenience Centers have been recognized as a promising election reform by both the National League of Women Voters and the Election Center National Task Force on Election Reform.

In New Mexico, Senate Bill 337, passed by the 2011 Legislature and signed by Governor Martinez, provides County Clerks the option to utilize Voting Convenience Centers in future elections. The City of Rio Rancho, with special permission from the Secretary of State, piloted a Voting Convenience Center model for its 2010 municipal election. Initial response to Rio Rancho VCCs has been very positive.

Benefits of Voting Convenience Centers

Voting Convenience Centers offer a number of advantages over the way Bernalillo County has administered Election Day in the past. Voters will appreciate the additional choice and convenience of VCCs. The Clerk's Office will appreciate the ability to achieve greater efficiency and quality control over critical election processes. County taxpayers and other

stakeholders will appreciate efforts to control the costs of conducting elections without compromising the integrity of the democratic process.

Benefits to the Voter

Current precinct-based Election Day voting involves a number of key frustrations for voters that can be mitigated by successful implementation of Voting Convenience Centers.

Although VCC locations are fewer in number than current polling locations, the open-precinct characteristic of VCCs means voters have more choice in voting. Surveys conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau after elections in 1998 and 2004 asked registered voters who failed to go to the polls to indicate their main reason for *not* voting. The most commonly-cited reason was, “no time/too busy”. This response indicates the act of voting is too costly among a set of competing tasks.

Researchers describe the *opportunity costs* as the tradeoff consequences of selecting one option over others. The consumer choice problem of opportunity costs in the context of voting suggests that individual voters have greater demands on their time than ever before. For most voters, the act of voting is one task among many that individuals must make extra time to complete on Election Day. The proximity of the polling location, expected travel and wait times, and ease of the voting process amount to the cost of voting which is often weighed against the list of other essential tasks (work, school, buying groceries and other errands, appointments, etc.). Therefore, a major part of reducing the opportunity cost is ensuring that voting can be fit into an average voter’s regular activity route. For the typical voter, the task of voting competes against a myriad of other responsibilities and desires that are part daily life in American society.

Election administrators and academics have understood this trend for quite some time and have responded by promoting greater utilization of absentee and early voting. Early voting reduces the opportunity costs of voting by extending the time to vote two weeks in advance of Election Day; while absentee voting allows voters to have a ballot mailed to an address of their choice to be completed at their convenience. Accommodating the need of voters to better fit the act of voting into their busy schedule allows for higher voter participation and improved voter experience. Consolidating the number of polling locations from 172 to 69 VCCs may

appear on the surface to have an adverse effect on convenience; however, the reverse is true. Figures 2 and 3 show by County Commission district how the current polling locations compare to a VCC model, and the significant impact on voters' perceptions in regards to their options on Election Day. The openness characteristic of VCCs presents an advantage over current single-location voting by reducing the opportunity cost of voting to the point that it is complimentary, instead of competitive, with other daily activities (Figure 4).

Figure 2. Number of Locations within each County Commission District

CC Dist.	Current # of Polling Locations	Proposed # of VCC Locations
1	33	13
2	35	17
3	46	14
4	34	10
5	39	15

Researchers also describe the *information costs* of voting as the degree to which voters

Figure 3. Voter Perception of Polling Location Options by County Commission District

CC Dist.	Current # Locations Available to Voters	VCC # of Locations Available to Voters
1	1	69
2	1	69
3	1	69
4	1	69
5	1	69

can obtain critical information to complete the act of voting (Stein & Vonnahme, 2007). This consists of knowing where to vote and how to get there. New Mexico State Statute requires voters to be issued a paper ballot that conforms to their address as indicated on their record of registration.

The current precinct-specific system

requires voters to report to their assigned precinct on Election Day to receive the proper ballot. Oftentimes, voters are unaware of this requirement or are unable to access the information to be directed to their proper location.

Figure 4. Benefits to Voter

Current Precinct-Based Voting	vs	Voting Convenience Centers
Closed-precinct voting: only 1 place to vote		Open precinct system: up to 69 places to vote
Limited choice = ↑ opportunity costs		Multiple choices = ↓ in opportunity costs
Act of voting competes with other daily tasks		Act of voting compliments other daily tasks

The voter registration system does not accommodate the highly-transient nature of modern society. Voters may be registered with one address but may be living in a completely different location. When voters arrive at the wrong polling location they are given the option of voting on a provisional ballot or directed to their assigned location. Both options occupy the time and attention of the Poll Officials and the voter to complete. Provisional balloting, although an acceptable recourse for the voter, is not the ideal way to cast votes, both from the standpoint of voter enfranchisement and the high per vote transaction cost incurred by County Clerks to receive, qualify and tabulate provisional ballots.

Another advantage of the Voting Convenience Center model that comes with the open-precinct characteristic is that it reduces the *information costs* of voting (Figure 5). When accompanied by a robust public information and education campaign, VCCs are much easier to locate and voter confusion is minimized. The voter does not have the burden of finding their assigned precinct; instead the voter has a menu of 69 available locations across the jurisdiction, some close to home, others close to work or school.

Figure 5. Benefits to Voter (2)

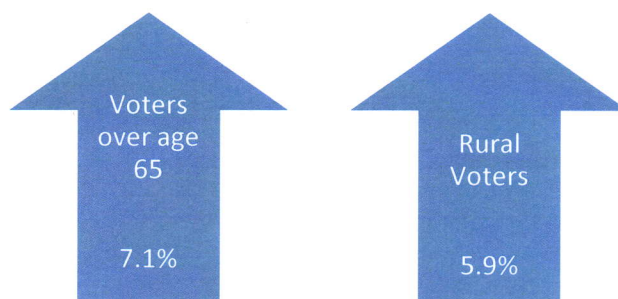
Current Precinct-Based Voting	vs	Voting Convenience Centers
High # of voters go to wrong location		No “wrong” location
1 assigned location = ↑ information costs		Multiple choices = ↓ in information costs
Provisional voting is common		Provisional voting is greatly reduced

In summary, research of VCC models implemented in other jurisdictions support the convenience advantage of voter convenience centers. The voter benefits from the open-precinct characteristic by having greater choice in voting. This voter benefit has been shown to improve overall voter experience when compared to current models. Research of voter response to VCCs implemented in Texas and Colorado support the notion that voters consider Voting Convenience Centers a positive change over how elections were conducted previously (Stein & Vonnahme, 2009, 2010). Reports from VCC pilot projects in Indiana indicate that 80% of voters preferred voting at a Convenience Center more than the previous single-precinct polling location (as stated by Dr. Scheele in *Vote Centers Work for Indiana*, 2010). More

importantly, voters in Bernalillo County have shown a preference for convenience with a strong move towards early and absentee voting. Recent turnout data even indicates that more than 84% of votes cast by people 65 years of age and older were either by absentee or early voting.

Furthermore, early research suggests the convenience and openness characteristics of VCCs may be an effective motivator for unlikely or infrequent voters to engage in the act of voting when they normally would consider the act of voting to be too competitive with other daily activities (Stein and Vonnahme, 2007). A common misconception associated with VCCs is a perceived negative impact on turnout when taking into consideration senior and rural populations. In fact, when compared to precinct-based voting, evidence from VCCs in Indiana indicates higher turnout among voters over age 65 and voters from rural precincts (Association of Circuit Court Clerks of Indiana, *Vote Centers Work for Indiana*, 2010).

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Benefits to County Clerk

Voting Convenience Centers present advantages to the Clerk's Bureau of Elections (BOE) by creating a system that is more manageable in terms of scale. Changing conditions and unanticipated issues can be more easily monitored and anticipated under a VCC model. Greater efficiencies in preparation and verification processes can be realized. Also, as discussed below, VCC research suggests BOE can realize longer term cost savings, primarily from reductions in personnel and materials.

With every election, Bureau of Elections administrators are expected to coordinate and implement the activities of a very large scale operation, involving months of preparation,

thousands of people and multiple, simultaneously-occurring processes and events. In the current model this involves:

- Hiring, recruiting, training up to 2600 Poll Officials to staff 441 voting precincts at 172 locations countywide
- Coordinating the delivery, set-up and return of 441 sets of voting systems, equipment and supplies
- Providing communication and support to 441 voting precincts

Understandably, the scale of the current operation limits the span of control of Election Administrators and complicates their ability to quickly address inevitable issues that arise.

The VCC model reduces the scale and complexity of administering Election Day to more manageable levels.

The VCC model reduces the scale and complexity of administering Election Day to more manageable levels. With 69 locations instead of 172, BOE can more adequately provision and staff voting locations. BOE can take greater care to select proven Poll Officials from a larger pool of applicants. BOE can focus Poll Official trainings to better serve voter needs and ensure compliance with the legal requirements for an open and accurate process.

Elections Administrators will have greater control over the set up and provisioning of Voting Convenience Centers. With fewer locations and more control over setup, the security of essential elections systems (ballots, tabulators, rosters, etc.) is enhanced. During Election Day, communication with 69 Voting Convenience Center locations will happen more quickly as the transfer of information is centralized. Administrators can address any issues at a site by communicating directly with trained troubleshooting staff stationed at every VCC rather than the current system that relies on a large number of less-trained roving troubleshooters. Figure 6 summarizes the advantages for the County Clerk's Office.

Figure 6. Benefits To County Clerk

Current Precinct-Based Voting	vs	Voting Convenience Centers
Manage 441 precincts in 172 locations		Manage 69 locations
Recruit, hire & train over 2,600 Poll Officials		Recruit, hire and train <1000 Poll Officials
Communication with 172 locations scattered and muted		Communication with 69 locations is more centralized and direct
Response to problems is delayed & limited		Response to problems is faster & comprehensive

Benefits to Stakeholders

While the voter is the paramount stakeholder in every election, other actors have great interest in how elections are administered. The media, campaigns/candidates, political parties and voter rights groups are stakeholders in the electoral process that hold the County accountable to the common goals of ensuring accurate, fair, transparent and cost effective elections. Voting Convenience Centers offer advantages for stakeholders by providing real-time voter activity information. With greater oversight allowed by managing only 69 VCCs, administrators and stakeholders can have greater confidence that critical voter eligibility, access and transparency processes are being performed uniformly and correctly across the jurisdiction. Also under a VCC model, critical election information is more easily gathered and disseminated to voters and stakeholders (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Benefits To Stakeholders

Current Precinct-Based Voting	vs	Voting Convenience Centers
Only second-hand information on Election Day turnout		Real-time, scheduled reporting of turnout throughout Election Day
Voter turnout data is collected at polling locations		Voter turnout data is gathered centrally in real-time
Less confidence that voting processes are applied uniformly across jurisdiction		Higher confidence in uniform processes and ability to address issues immediately
Slow dissemination of critical information		Faster dissemination of critical information

The Voting Convenience Center model utilizes an electronic pollbook operated from a secure central server. All voting centers are networked to the server that contains a database of the roster of registered voters in the county. Voter activity occurring at VCCs around the county is updated to the central database. This functionality ensures no voter can vote at

multiple locations. The system also allows for BOE to generate real-time voter activity reports from the central database. This information can be provided to stakeholders throughout Election Day. Additionally, this information can be used to monitor voter traffic at individual voting locations. Voter traffic updates can be disseminated via various media to provide voters real-time information about which vote centers are experiencing the highest level of turnout.

Stakeholders hold the County Clerk's office accountable to ensuring elections run as smoothly as possible. The relative limit of control and delayed ability to address issues in the field is an inherent characteristic of the current precinct-based model. With 441 precincts and thousands of Poll Officials it is difficult to ensure critical election systems are being implemented uniformly. When issues arise, the response is limited by the speed of communication and staff deployment. The VCC model reduces the scale of the election and increases manageability. The smaller span of control allows for better-trained staff and immediate problem-solving. Stakeholders will be assured critical processes are implemented uniformly at every VCC while having unprecedented access to information.

Implementing the VCC Model in Bernalillo County

Moving to the Voting Convenience Center model represents a fundamental evolution of

the Election Day experience for Bernalillo County voters.

A comprehensive voter education campaign will be an important component of the implementation strategy.

The Clerk's Bureau of Elections is not underestimating how every corner of Election Day operations and coordination must be thoroughly reviewed and reengineered to ensure voters and the County will realize the full value and benefit of the VCC concept.

The first implementation step is detailing the methodology applied for determining the number and location of Voter Convenience Centers. BOE is developing a VCC implementation strategy that details the design and administration of the VCC network. The strategy also identifies essential tasks and places them along a critical path leading to the 2012 federal election cycle. The strategy incorporates lessons learned from case studies of VCCs in use in other jurisdictions. BOE also incorporates detailed analysis of Bernalillo County voter data to establish capacity thresholds and voter behavior patterns. A

comprehensive voter education campaign will be an important component of the implementation strategy.

Setting VCC Locations

Senate Bill 337, passed and signed into law in the spring of 2011, outlines the requirements for selecting Voting Convenience Center locations and establishes the technology specifications to allow for secure, convenient and efficient service of voters on Election Day. The law sets a “10:1 Rule” for determining the number and distribution of Voting Convenience Centers. Essentially, Bernalillo County’s network of 441 precincts must be consolidated at a ratio of ten regular precincts to one VCC consolidation. Each VCC consolidation must be assigned a VCC polling location that lies within the boundaries of the consolidated precinct (1-3-4, NMSA 1978). The statute authorizes the Clerk’s Office to add Alternate Voting Locations (Early Voting Sites) on top of the assigned VCC locations.

BOE started by collecting voter registration, turnout and population data, and then leveraged the power of Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis to develop a clear-path method that would determine the most fair and accessible set of VCC locations. Research of other jurisdictions that have piloted the VCC model or rely exclusively on the practice has also helped inform the methodology applied in Bernalillo County. An emphasis was also placed on the distribution of sites in relation to the distribution of registered voters, relative turnout and the variations in population density affecting the relative travel distance to some sites (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Bernalillo County Urban Analysis by Quadrant

Quadrants (using I-25 and I-40)	2008 Election Day Turnout	% of total registered voters	Distribution of Urban VCCs
NE	39.81%	38.53%	34.92%
SE	14.95%	15.35%	17.46%
NW	23.58%	25.26%	22.22%
SW	17.42%	16.98%	25.40%

Minimum site (facility) and location (geographic distribution) criteria were developed to guide the consolidation process and VCC selections. A preliminary evaluation of primary and alternate VCC locations was conducted over a two week period using staff most experienced in site selection. Candidate sites were measured against a set of minimum site and location requirements and then scored and ranked against their alternate locations. Elements included minimum parking standards, ADA accommodations and path of travel analysis (see VCC Preliminary Evaluation Worksheet, appendix i). Site criteria involved the capacity and accessibility requirements of the actual facility where voting will take place. Only those locations that ranked exceptionally high were identified for VCCs.

Location criteria involved the geographic orientation of the site, its relationship to other sites, proximity to transportation infrastructure and the general degree of community awareness of the site. The majority of proposed sites are at Albuquerque Public Schools. School facilities have inherent qualities that make them a good fit for the VCC concept and are evenly distributed throughout the county. Schools are generally known by the public and easily accessible along most major automobile and public transit systems. Experts indicate that the normally accepted distance to walk from a bus stop is one quarter mile, which is why all locations selected fall within that distance (appendix iv). Also, BOE is in the process of establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with APS administration to set clear terms and conditions for use of APS facilities at relatively little cost to the County Clerk's Office.

The applied methodology resulted in a consolidation of 441 regular voting precincts into 48 VCC consolidations. BOE then overlayed the anticipated 17 Early Voting sites that will be utilized as additional VCC locations to establish a total of 69 proposed Voting Convenience Center locations as shown in Figure 9 (list of proposed VCC locations with maps, appendix ii).

Consolidations comply with the

statutory "10:1 Rule" and meet voter turnout and registration threshold criteria established by BOE analysis.

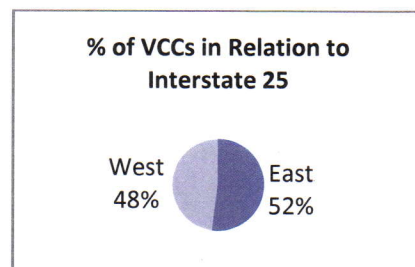
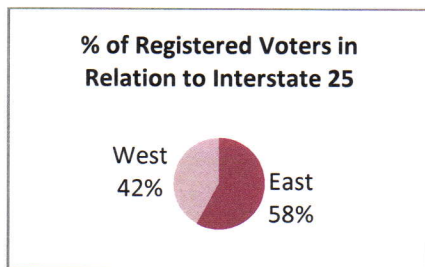
Figure 9.

	Urban Area	Rural Area	EV Overlay	Total VCCs
VCC Locations	47	5	17	69

The methodology required the utilization of the statutory option to exempt rural precincts from the VCC consolidation (1-3-4.D, NMSA 1978). Up to five regular precincts in

rural areas may operate outside of the VCC model depending on the reliability of connectivity to the central network at specific proposed locations. Conveniently, the majority of rural precincts (east mountain area) have a high likelihood of fitting the VCC model.

Along with familiarity and functionality, proximity and accessibility analysis shows that approximately 98% of County voters have access to at least one VCC within a three mile travel distance. For East Mountain and Native American areas, proximity under the VCC model is virtually unchanged or improved. Further proximity analysis indicates VCC locations in the urban area are nearly proportional to the distribution of regular precincts as required by the statute, when taking into consideration the actual number of registered voters and their proximity to VCC locations. The graphs below illustrate the relationship of VCCs to registered voters.



Administrators in three Tennessee Counties, after extensive focus-group testing of voter preferences, established a maximum distance threshold of five miles when determining the number of VCCs and the travel distance of any registered voter to a location. Bernalillo County BOE established and has met a *three* mile threshold, meaning the distance to every proposed VCC is well within the acceptable range of negligible impact on voters (Radial Coverage Map, appendix iii).

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VCC Setup and Voter Processing

The layout of polling locations, staffing structure and the system to process voters are being tailored to a VCC environment. All avenues for improving voter experience and

introducing greater efficiency have been explored and are being incorporated into the planning and implementation processes. BOE is designing a VCC network with the capacity to handle up to 150,000 Election Day voters at equal or better performance measures than the 2008 General

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Election. Taking into consideration numbers from our 2008 Early Voting site daily turnout figures, our office has proven its ability to process at least 2000 voters with four service points at any one location. These results were achieved even with additional per-voter processing time needed because of the pre-printed paper ballot model used during the 2008 election.

BOE is utilizing available data to establish VCC capacity thresholds with the aim of minimizing congestion and voter processing time. The average size Voting Convenience Centers are being designed to accommodate approximately 2,000 voters a day with equal or better processing time as occurs in the current precinct-based model. A study conducted by Dr. Atkeson from the University of New Mexico, reveals measures taken in 2010 Early Voting sites contributed to an average wait time that improved significantly between 2008 and 2010 (Atkeson et. al., 2011). Also, sites can be scaled to handle more intense traffic and the larger consolidations. In conjunction with our proven performance indicators and turnout analysis, each site can be custom tailored to accommodate its environment. VCC locations will be located in school gymnasiums, as these locations meet or exceed the minimum square footage required to service the amount of voters expected. Again, VCCs were prescreened using minimum parking and accessibility requirements, including walking distance to public transit stops and ADA compliance. A sample of a typical VCC site layout is included in the appendices (appendix v).

As Figure 10 shows, we have applied field analysis to determine how each VCC is staffed and equipped. We can infer from these figures that adjusting the points of service will directly correlate to the number of voters we can assist at any given location. Another underlying factor relates to the extensive site selection process. Each location proposed has the size capacity and parking accessibility necessary to meet extreme demands. Therefore, highly

populated consolidations and locations in business centers have the flexibility to scale up or down accordingly.

Figure 10. 2008 Early Voting Transactions Report		
# Voters Processed (single hour)	Service Points	Daily Processing Capabilities (assuming 12 hour day)
200	4	2400

Election Day voters in a VCC model will be processed in a manner resembling the way early voters in the 2010 General Election were processed. VCC sites will be of similar size as a typical early voting site. Though the 2010 non-Presidential Election is not directly comparable to the 2012 cycle, it did provide us with an understanding and control of the technologies associated with ballot-on-demand systems. Our experiences reinforce our expectations to meet, and most likely exceed, the demands of the traffic we encountered in 2008 (Figure 11).

Figure 11. 2008 Election Day Turnout in Proposed VCC Model		
Average # Registered Voters by VCC Consolidation	2008 Average Election Day Turnout by VCC Consolidation	Anticipated 2012 Average Turnout by VCC Consolidation (Approximately 10% Increase)
5,797	1,210	1272

As mentioned, the needs and concerns of elderly, rural, limited mobility and transit-dependent voters were considered and incorporated heavily in VCC selection and planning efforts. Although VCC sites are fewer in number than the current model, BOE analysis and planning demonstrates that the proposed set of VCC sites will meet or exceed accessibility, convenience and proportional distribution standards.

Other elements of VCC voter processing planning that will ensure a positive voter experience include:

- Public safety and protection is always a priority and we continue to plan accordingly. The 2012 elections fall on dates when APS schools will be out of service which will mitigate concerns about the voting public interfering with students at school. The increased oversight of VCCs and greater county staff presence will allow immediate deployment of resources to handle public safety disturbances such as security threats and voter coercion and intimidation.

- Improving *Where do I Vote?* with a customized Google Map application in development to quickly identify VCCs using a voter's actual location. The features will include distance to locations, average drive/walk times, site specific information, general election information and public transit route planning capability (appendix vi). A mobile Smartphone application will also be available.
- Our office will continue to raise the bar by providing cutting edge and innovative services. We will utilize live data reports and enhanced communication at each site to provide real-time traffic analysis. Voters will be presented with estimated wait times so they can be better informed when selecting from one of the 69 locations. Also, we intend to establish live video feeds of each location to improve security and transparency.
- The more manageable VCC network will provide greater tracking and security of critical election systems and equipment. The current model requires delivery of election equipment to the 172 polling locations starting nearly a week before Election Day. While equipment is secured, it often remains unmonitored until arrival of the Precinct Board on the morning of the election. On the other hand, the VCC model allows for shorter delivery lead times, password protected systems, ballot auditing and tamper recognition.
- Proportional distribution analysis and employment data acquired from the Mid Region Council of Governments allows BOE to identify VCC sites to be scaled up to accommodate higher volumes of voters (MRCOG DASZ, appendix vii). This analysis will help keep all sites within acceptable wait times of 15 minutes or less.
- By applying operation line management calculations, BOE can determine the scale of the voter processing system required at any given site. This data helps ensure average wait time goals are not exceeded. Line calculation variables include processing time, number of service stations and expected customer volumes.
- As was applied in early voting sites during the elections in 2010, the system for processing voters included a "special case" workstation that offloaded the 10% of voters who need extra help to resolve registration problems or need to be issued provisional ballots. This allowed the 90% of regular voter processing activity to continue uninterrupted at the main workstations. This successful approach will again be incorporated into the VCC voter processing model.

- Using GIS, mapped Early Voting activity from the 2008 General Election. This information provided insights into voter behavior and travel patterns in an open-precinct environment. Research showed that three out of four early voters given the opportunity to select from a number of sites to choose from will vote in the vicinity of their registered address; leaving 25% of voters electing a site on their activity route.
- 2008 Early Voting performance suggests that 44% of the county voting population, or approximately 125,000 voters, may prefer an open-precinct system. Also, studies conducted by Professor Atkeson show that voter preference for VCCs increases approximately 15% after voters have been informed of the benefits. Moreover, Bernalillo County voters are more supportive of VCCs than the average voter in the state because of the positive experiences with Early Voting in the County.
- As with every election, Election Administrators must prepare for the unexpected. Contingency plans, backup systems and procedures will be developed to address potential problems associated with connectivity failures, election systems malfunctions, power outages, high-voter volume, network crashes and public safety disturbances.

Public Education

The County Clerk's Office is developing a robust public information campaign to ensure every voter has the information they need to conveniently cast their vote at a Voting Convenience Center. Public information efforts will employ a multimedia approach to reach every subcategory of voter in the weeks leading up to the 2012 Primary and General elections. VCC information will be disseminated via direct contact, television, direct mail, social media, print and the County website.

The public media component will be partnered with an ambitious community outreach plan to provide critical VCC information directly to community and stakeholder groups. These include but are not limited to:

- Senior centers, advocacy organizations and support agencies
- Disability rights groups
- High Schools and youth advocacy and support organizations

- Minority advocacy organizations and support agencies
- Universities/colleges
- Voter rights organizations, voter mobilization campaigns
- Professional associations, large employers
- Neighborhood associations, community centers and public agencies
- Political parties and campaigns

Some highlights of the public information and outreach campaign include:

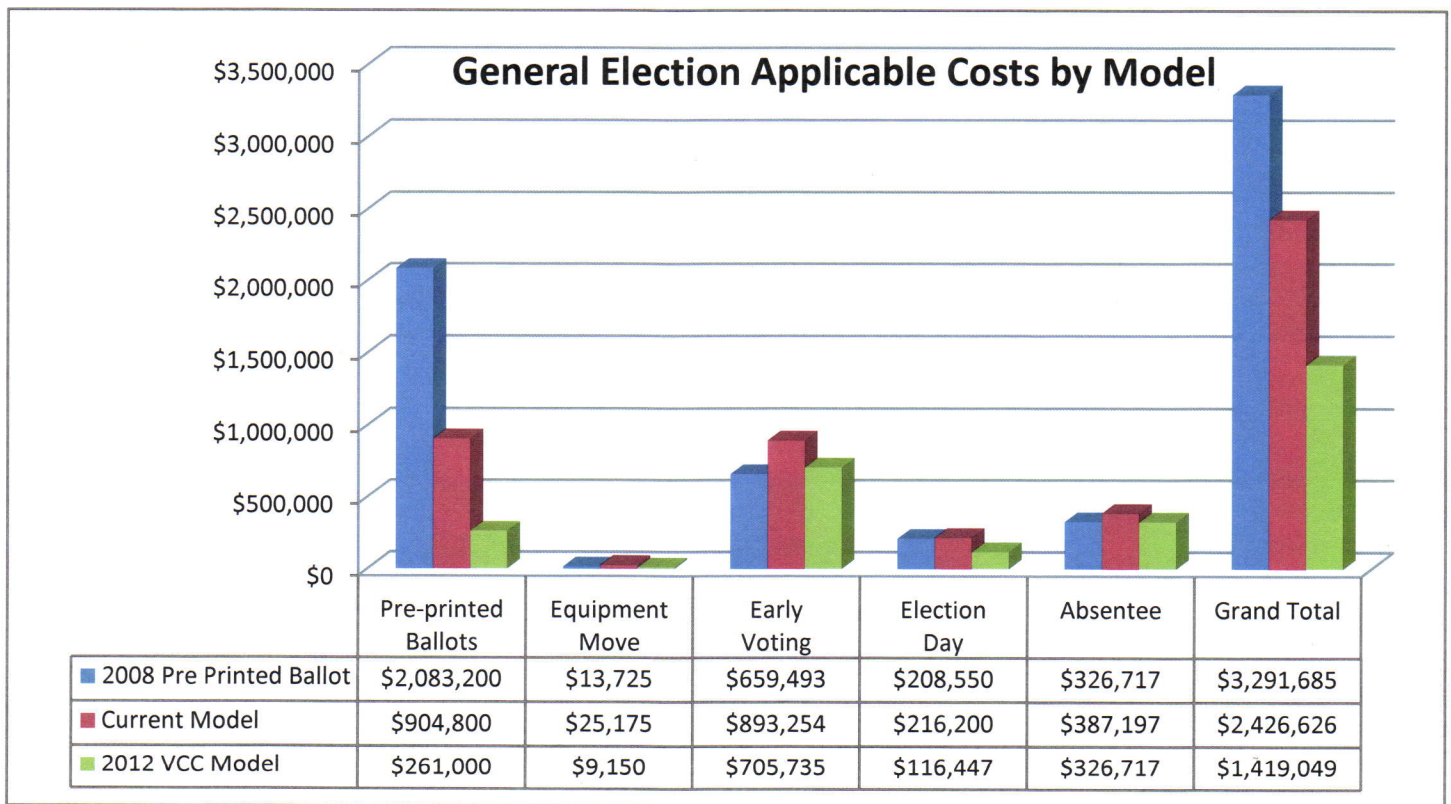
- On-bus election information public service announcements (PSAs): BOE will partner with ABQRide to provide a video PSA to run on Rapid Ride video screens. Interior and exterior banner-print advertising will be considered to target transit-dependent community with VCC location information.
- Directing outreach efforts to seniors. BOE will partner with senior centers, assisted care homes, City and County Senior Affairs divisions, and senior advocacy/support organizations. Outreach will include presentations to promote absentee and early voting. BOE will work with partner groups to offer “Absentee Voting Workshops” at various locations. Such presentations will provide step-by-step assistance to seniors for completing the absentee voting process. Additionally, BOE will coordinate with partner groups to provide transportation to take seniors to nearby early voting and VCC locations. BOE can also offer a direct contact to partner groups to aid coordination of voter information events and transportation arrangements.
- A comprehensive VCC guide (appendix viii) and a video will be developed and disseminated into the community. Emphasis will be placed on educating voters about the improvements made under a VCC implementation and the benefits they will realize.
- Establishing open communication and building partnerships with elected officials and policy makers is a priority. Representatives and community liaisons are perfect conduits for reaching communities and have a more intimate understanding of their constituents. Being well informed and taking into consideration unique factors will help increase the efficacy of our outreach program.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

A primary responsibility and practice of the County Clerk’s Office is to search for business solutions that promote cost savings without sacrificing service. Our office has taken

that mentality a step further by striving to achieve savings while improving service. We have demonstrated these values with the changes made between the 2008 and 2010 elections; switching primarily from pre-printed ballots to ballot-on-demand in all of our Early Voting locations. The upcoming 2012 elections present us with another opportunity to make service improvements while decreasing costs, because of the ability to incorporate VCCs. It is important to recognize that evidence from VCC implementation in other jurisdictions suggests significant cost advantages over the current precinct-based model (IFPI, 2010). Savings have been realized primarily from reductions in temporary personnel and materials which exceed any increased costs associated with the greater use of technology in the VCC model. Figure 12 summarizes the type of savings we can expect by shifting from the current model towards VCCs.

Figure 12. General Election Cost Comparison



Clearly, the disparity between the election costs associated with each model are significant. We experienced more than a 25% decrease between 2008 and 2010 by utilizing VCC technology in our Early Voting sites alone. The potential savings under a VCC model is an additional 41% from 2010; which would equate to approximately a 55% reduction in election administration costs in just four years. These estimates do not include the \$200,000 that will be allocated for public relations and community education.

Conclusion

With the passage of *SB 377* Bernalillo County is presented with an opportunity to vastly improve the current electoral process. A relatively new concept gaining popularity on a national level, Voting Convenience Centers in New Mexico was born from the bill. Derived from the efforts of a County Clerk in Larimer County, Colorado, VCCs are an Election Day solution that utilizes technological capabilities such as electronic pollbooks and Ballot on Demand to enhance the voter experience and increase the efficiency of election administration.

The fundamental intent of VCCs is to make voting more convenient and accessible by providing voters with choice and flexibility; words rarely used when describing voting. Our office is prepared to offer voters 69 location options across the jurisdiction as opposed to one, pre-assigned polling location. Voters will be identified in a real-time database and be able to receive their unique precinct ballot style at each of these locations. Other factors that contribute directly to convenience and accessibility are increased security measures, more accurate roster searches, and a significant reduction in provisional ballots. It is important to recognize that in states where VCCs were implemented, studies indicate that voters prefer them over a precinct-specific polling location model. Ultimately, voters value the options and convenience associated with VCCs.

As Election Administrators, we will also realize benefits of Voting Convenience Centers. Taking into consideration the decrease in physical locations, we can anticipate better controls and monitoring because we are operating on a much smaller scale. Our response time to polling location issues will be much faster and more comprehensive. Technology and human resources can more easily be distributed to a minimal number of polling locations. Also,

precinct officials will be better prepared for the demands of Election Day, because more time can be allocated to training a few versus recruiting and hiring many.

Additionally, cost savings are a result of the increased efficiency and the more calculated use of resources associated with VCC. There is a positive relationship between the number of polling locations and the expense involved in election administration. Therefore, fewer facilities lead to fewer costly commodities such as rent, materials, logistics/moving, and personnel. A clear indicator of this is the substantial drop in the number of poll officials required to staff a current-model election (2600) as opposed to a VCC election (<1000).

Other beneficiaries of VCCs are the election stakeholders, i.e., elected officials, advocacy groups, media, political parties, taxpayers, etc. Each entity has an interest in making sure the County conducts a fiscally responsible, accurate, fair and transparent election. Election Day operations will be sustained on a smaller budget while providing robust services. Real time information will be available at all times because of the technology and communication established with a more manageable number of precincts. This means that voter turnout reports and critical information from the front-line will be disseminated to interested parties within minutes. A centralized, auditable database will house all the voter data and provide a clear representation of voter activity. VCCs capture convenience, cost savings and comprehensive information in one package.

However, success does not come without planning and preparation. Implementing such an enormous task is a challenge that requires extensive research, organization, experience, commitment and problem solving ability. Fortunately, our office is suited with the human capital needed to tackle this project with a very methodical and comprehensive approach. In fact, our strategy incorporates the following actions to ensure a positive outcome:

- Intense research including academic studies and other jurisdictions
- Legal compliance
- Proportional distribution
- Three mile radial coverage standards
- Stringent accessibility requirements (Location Evaluation Form): ADA, adequate parking, familiar locations, public transportation with a quarter mile

- Enhanced *Where do I Vote?* features
- Innovative and creative uses of technology
- Extensive outreach and education campaign
- Thorough historical turnout and line management analysis
- Incorporated Mid-Region Counsel of Governments employment data into location traffic preparation plans
- Developed setup and support measures
- Expansive networking and communication systems
- Increased security and reliability principles

The delivery of VCCs to the County will continue to be a well managed project, incorporating all the skills, dedication and experience of our office. The high standards of excellence established by this administration are the pillars that propel our office into the cutting edge of election administration. Our office is excited to be pioneers in this state and around the country, while setting an example for others to follow.

References

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Appendix

i. *VCC Preliminary Evaluation*

Evaluators:	Date:
Location Name:	Primary or Alternate? (circle)
Location Address:	
Room/Building:	
Possible alternate room?(circle) Yes No	If yes, please describe:
Basic Site Criteria (indicate key site criteria on site map)	
1. Indicate facility entrances and exits (blue arrows)	Reviewer's Score
2. Note below any obstacles to navigation, safety and/or easy access via these entrances	
3. Yellow Highlight the building(s) where voting will take place (if 2 locations, label A&B)	
4. Mark a RED '*' to indicate entrances to voting building and main entrance. If no external entrance to voting building, note other access points below.	
5. Use RED dotted-lines to mark the paths of travel from the mid-point of each major parking lot to the voting building entrance. Measure and record the distance. Lot # 1 distance 1) _____ - 2) _____ - 3) _____ - 4) _____ Lot #2 distance 1) _____ - 2) _____ - 3) _____ - 4) _____	
6. Blue Highlight up to 2 parking lots closest to the voting building. lot #1 spaces _____ lot #2 spaces _____ (label 1&2 on map)	
7. ADA requirements: Use Blue sharpie to circle and count ADA parking spaces. ADA spaces _____ ADA ramp slope _____	
8. Mark 'SP' for spaces dedicated for county elections staff parking. # of spaces _____	
9. Describe below any obstacles to navigation, safety and/or easy access to the building where voting will take place.	
10. After visiting all proposed sites per CP, rank this site _____	
Basic Location Criteria (indicate key location criteria on location map)	
1. Identify up to 2 nearest transit stops and indicate distance to location entrance. a. Route# _____ Stop: _____ Route# _____ Stop: _____ b. Distance (mi) _____ Distance (mi) _____ c. Walking Time _____ Walking Time _____	
2. List up to 2 nearest major intersections a. _____ and _____ Distance to Location: _____ b. _____ and _____ Distance to Location: _____	

Notes:

Total score for this candidate EDVC location:

ii. *Proposed VCC Locations and Consolidation Map (1 of 4)*

Bernalillo County Clerk's Office

Voting Convenience Center Locations

Alphabetical List with Recommended Additions

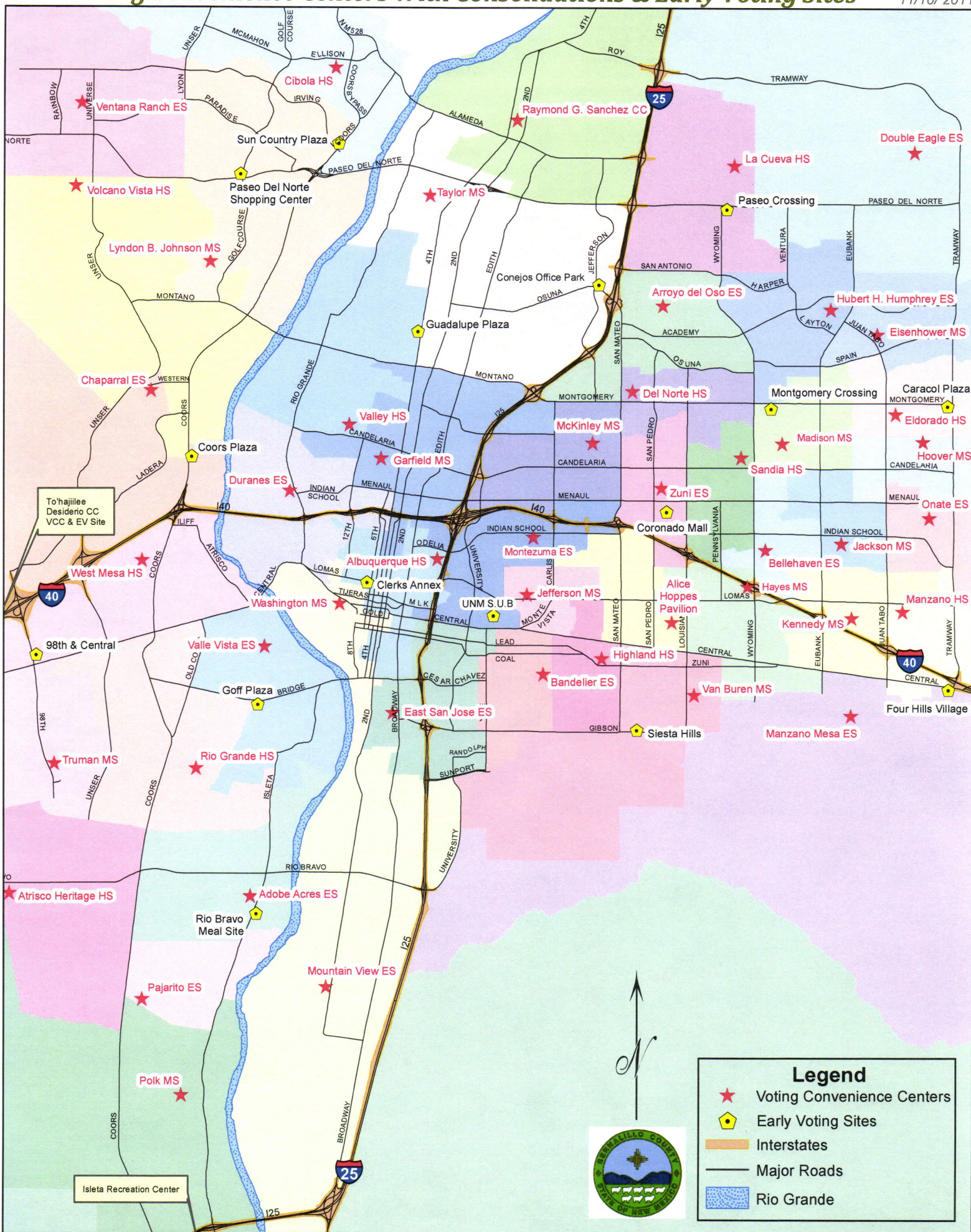
VCC	Location	Address	Consisting of Precincts											
173	A. Montoya E.S.	24 Public School Rd, Tijeras 87059	303	553	554	555	557	570	572					
141	Albuquerque H.S.	800 Odelia Rd NE 87102	131	133	163	164	165	212	217	221	225	226		
113	Alice Hoppes Pavilion	310 San Pedro Dr NE 87108	311	312	313	314	371	372	373	374	384	385		
153	Armijo E.S.	1440 Gatewood SW 87105 (replace 153)	046	047	048	061	062	063	064	065	066	067		
53	Arroyo Del Oso E.S.	6504 Harper Dr NE 87109	407	409	419	420	421	438	440	488	489	490		
165	Atrisco Heritage H.S.	10800 Dennis Chavez Blvd SW 87121	054	072	073	074	077	109	141	142	143	144		
133	Bandelier E.S.	3309 Pershing Ave SE 87106	102	107	242	243	244	245	246	251	255	256		
81	Bellehaven E.S.	8701 Princess Jeanne Ave NE 87112	417	461	462	464	465	471	472	473	474	475		
17	Chaparral E.S.	6325 Milne Road NW 87120	023	026	028	029	039	057	070	119	120	134		
1	Cibola H.S.	1510 Ellison Dr NW 87114	002	003	068	069	078	087	116	170	171			
69	Del Norte H.S.	5323 Montgomery Blvd NE 87109	400	405	406	408	439	481	497	498	499	500		
189	Desiderio C.C.	ToHajiilee, NM 87026	031											
41	Double Eagle E.S.	8901 Lowell Dr NE 87122	425	426	447	456	537	539	541	560	567	569		
45	Eisenhower M.S.	11001 Camero Rd NE 87111	428	429	430	449	451	452	483	520	602	603		
57	Eldorado H.S.	11300 Montgomery Blvd NE 87111	454	480	515	521	522	527	528	562	565	566		
181	Forest Meadow Church	54 Hwy 217, Tijeras 87059	551	552	571									
25	Garfield MS.	3501 6th St NW 87107	161	185	186	187	193	194	195	196	197	211		
109	Hayes M.S.	1100 Texas St NE 87110	315	316	317	318	321	322	323	326	327	477		
137	Herman Sanchez C.C.	1830 William St SE 87102 (replace 137)	094	095	101	103	104	105	106	223	224	241		
129	Highland H.S.	4700 Coal Ave SE 87108	252	253	254	271	272	273	274	382	383			
89	Hoover M.S.	12015 Tivoli Ave NE 87111	505	516	517	518	524	525	526	530	561	564		
49	Hubert Humphrey E.S.	9801 Academy Hills Dr NE 87111	427	450	482	484	487	511	529	538	563	568		
185	Isleta Rec Center	Building 60, Tribal Road 40, Isleta NM	093											
85	Jackson M.S.	10600 Indian School Rd NE 87112	463	502	503	504	531	532	533	534	535	536		
125	Jefferson M.S.	712 Girard Blvd NE 87106	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	381	386	387		
101	Kennedy M.S.	721 Tomasita St NE 87123	291	292	306	329	476	478	542	543	544	545		
37	La Cueva H.S.	7801 Wilshire Ave NE, 87122	410	418	422	423	424	448	485	486	510	601		
13	LBJ M.S.	6811 Taylor Ranch Rd NW 87120	019	079	082	083	084	085	089	111	112	114		
61	Madison M.S.	3501 Moon St NE 87111	453	495	506	507	508	509	512	513	514	523		
97	Manzano H.S.	12200 Lomas Blvd NE 87112	293	295	297	298	299	300	301	302	305	330		
105	Manzano Mesa E.S.	801 Elizabeth St SE 87123	258	289	290	294	296	324	328	331	332	333		
65	McKinley M.S.	4500 Comanche Rd NE 87110	346	431	432	433	435	436	437	442	443	444		
121	Montezuma E.S.	3100 Indian School Rd NE 87106	214	215	216	341	342	343	344	345	358	375		
93	Onate E.S.	12415 Brentwood Hills Blvd NE 87112	304	307	308	519	540	546	547	548	549	550		
161	Polk M.S.	2220 Raymac Rd SW 87105	075	076	088	090	091	092	096	097	098	099		

Proposed VCC Locations and Consolidation Map (2 of 4)

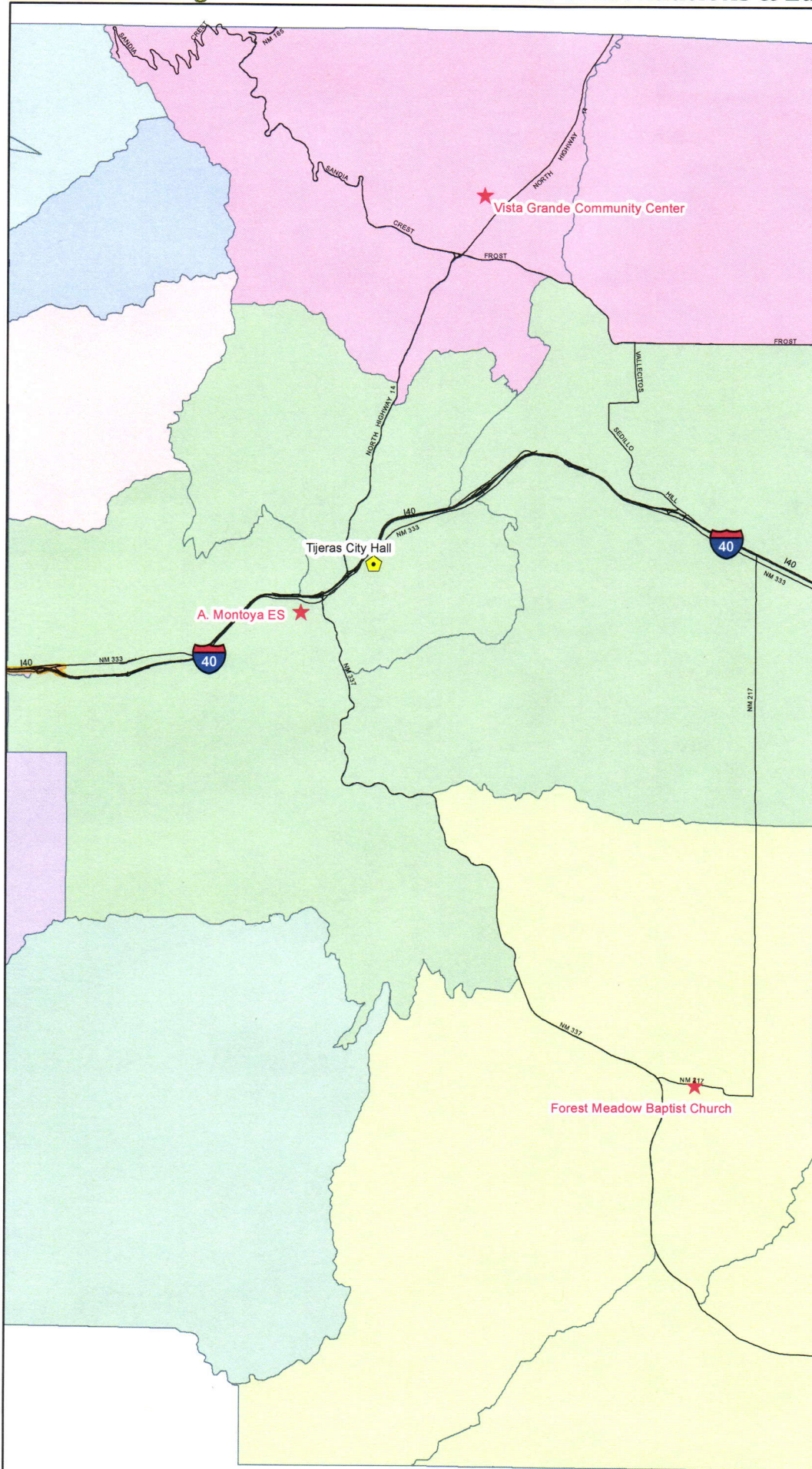
CC	Location	Address	Consisting of Precincts									
169	Rio Grande H.S.	2300 Arenal Road SW 87105	032	033	043	044	045	049	050	051	071	139
77	Sandia H.S.	7801 Candelaria Rd NE 87110	413	414	415	416	466	491	492	493	494	496
29	Taft M.S.	620 Schulte Rd NW 87107 (replace 29)	004	012	013	014	015	017	108	191	192	347
33	Taylor M.S.	8200 Guadalupe Tr NW 87114	005	006	007	008	009	010	016	018	086	455
157	Truman M.S.	9400 Benavides Rd SW 87121	041	042	052	053	056	059	060	137	138	140
21	Valley H.S.	1505 Candelaria Rd NW 87107	011	150	151	152	153	180	181	182	183	184
117	Van Buren M.S.	700 Louisiana Blvd SE 87108	257	275	278	281	282	283	284	285	286	287
5	Ventana Ranch E.S.	6801 Ventana Village Rd NW 87114	001	080	115	117	118	127	128	129		
177	Vista Grande C.C.	15 La Madera Rd, Sandia Park 87047	556	558	559	573						
9	Volcano Vista H.S.	8100 Rainbow Blvd NW 87114	020	021	022	024	025	027	030	081	110	113
145	Washington M.S.	1101 Park Ave SW 87102	121	122	123	124	125	132	135	154	162	166
149	West Mesa H.S.	6701 Fortuna Rd NW 87121	034	035	036	037	038	040	055	058	136	
73	Zuni E.S.	6300 Claremont Ave NE 87110	401	402	403	404	411	412	434	441	445	446
R29	Raymond G. Sanchez	9800 4th St NW 87114	TBD									
R137	East San Jose E.S.	415 Thaxton Ave SE 87102	TBD									
R153	Valle Vista E.S.	1700 Mae Ave SW 87105	TBD									
A1	Duranes E.S.	2436 Zickert Rd NW 87104	TBD									
A2	Mountain View E.S.	5317 2nd St SW 87105	TBD									
A3	Pajarito E.S.	2701 Don Felipe SW 87105	TBD									
A4	Adobe Acres E.S.	1724 Camino del Valle SW 87105	TBD									

	2010 Early Voting Election Day VCC	Address
1	Rio Bravo Meal Site	3910 Isleta SW
2	Goff Plaza	1720 Bridge SW
3	98th & Central	120 98th St NW
4	Clerks Annex	620 Lomas NW (West Section)
5	Siesta Hills	5405 Gibson SE
6	Los Ranchos Villa	6601 4th St NW
7	Alameda West	10131 Coors NW
8	Petroglyph Plaza	8201 Golf Course Rd NW
9	Coors Plaza	3200 Coors NW
10	Paseo Crossing	8000 Paseo Del Norte NE
11	Caracol Plaza	12500 Montgomery NE
12	Montgomery Crossing	8510 Montgomery NE
13	Montgomery Assets	6910 Montgomery NE
14	University of New Mexico	Student Union Building
15	Daskalos	5339 & 5339 A Menaul NE
16	Mission Square	1331 Juan Tabo NE
17	Tijeras	12 Camino Municipal-Tijeras, NM

11/10/2011

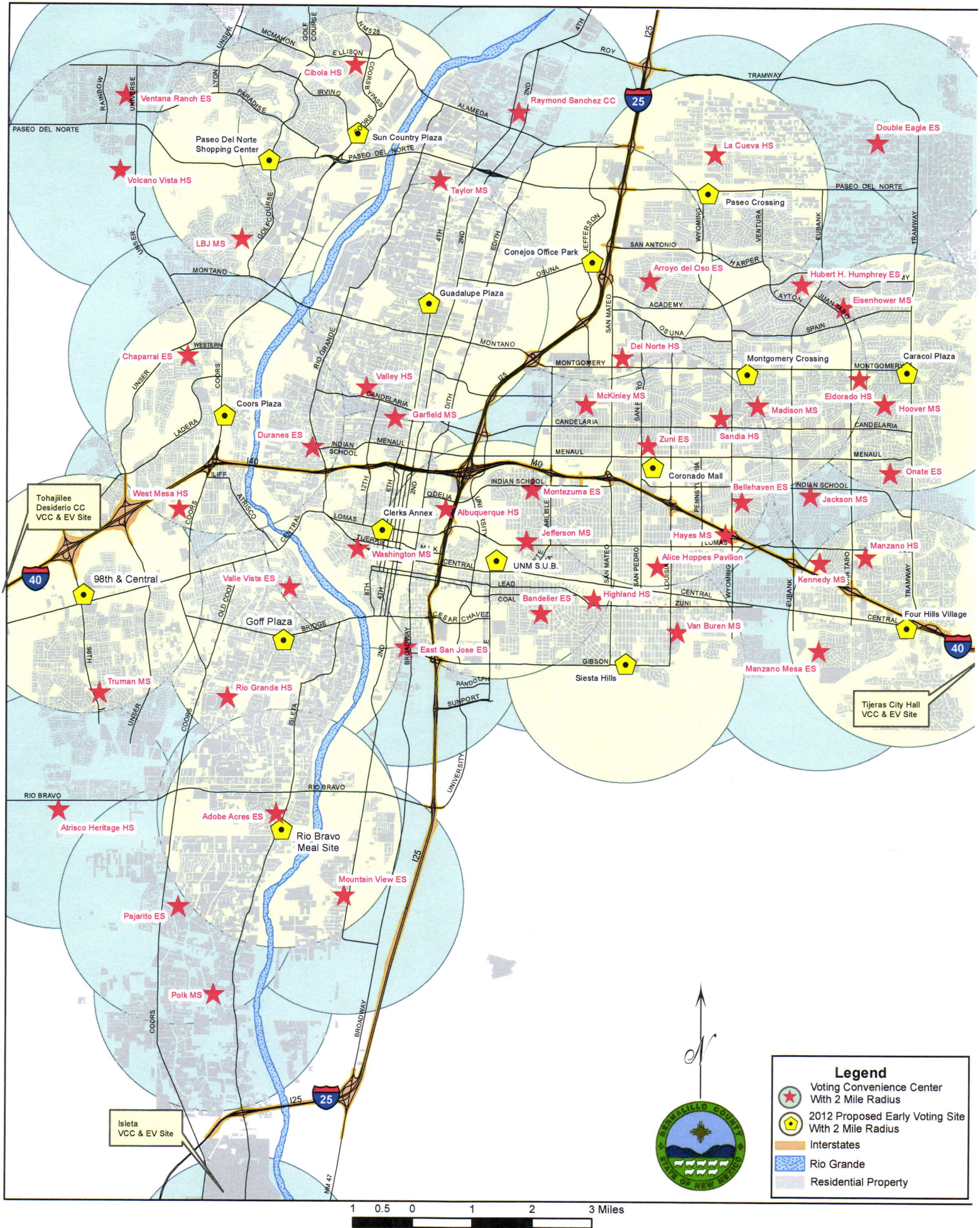


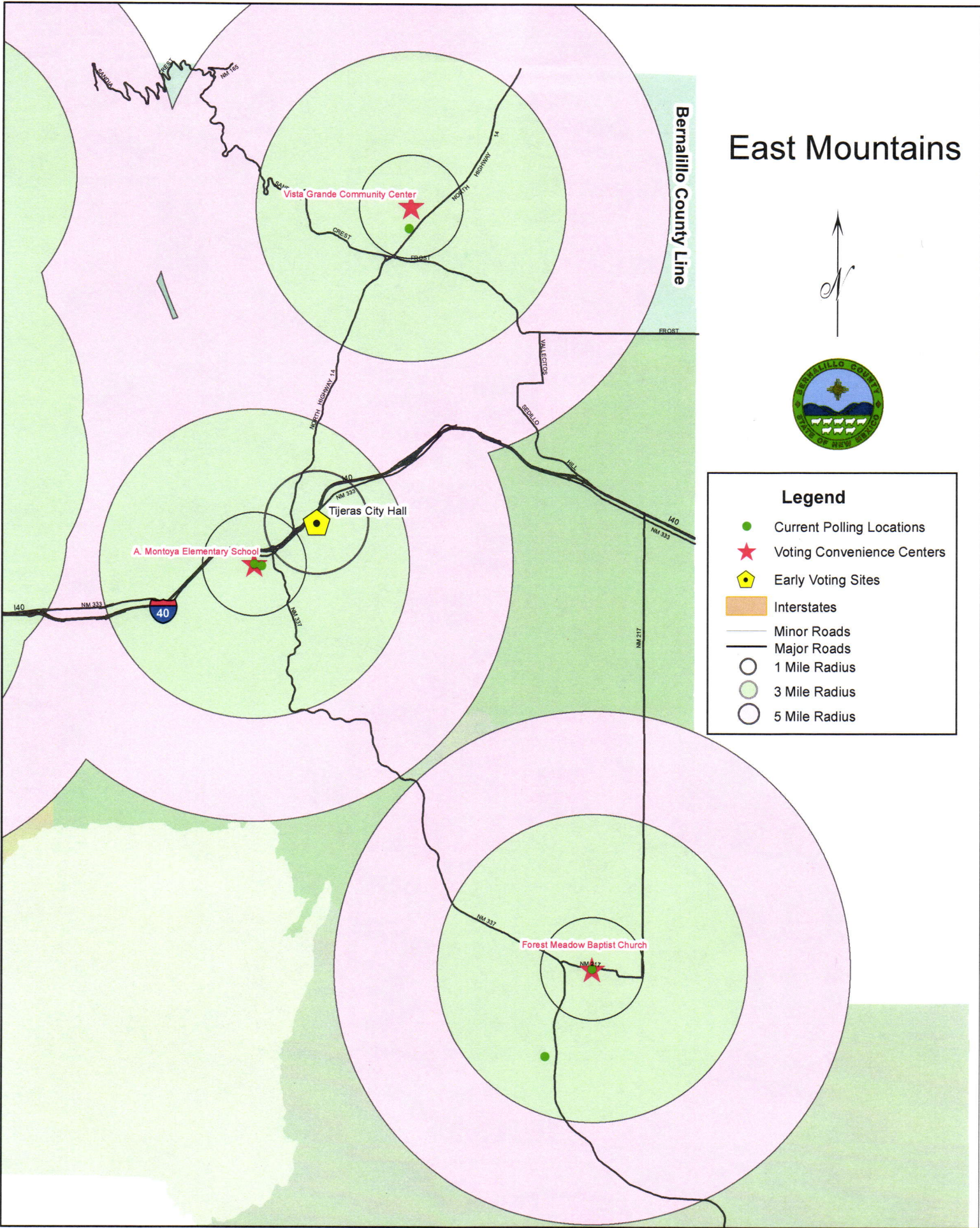
East Mountains



Legend

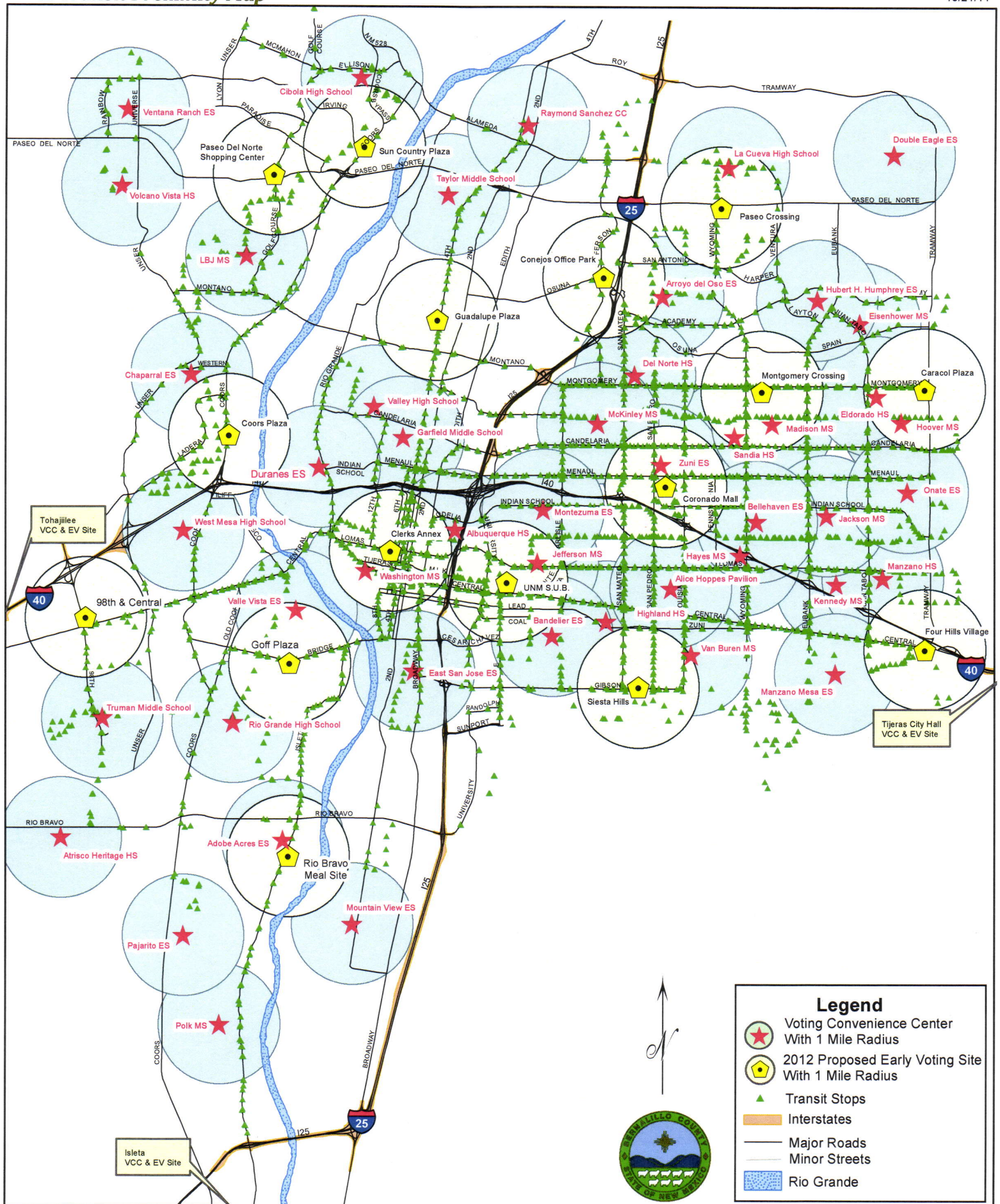
- ★ Voting Convenient Centers
- ⬡ Early Voting Sites
- Interstates
- Major Roads
- ▦ Rio Grande



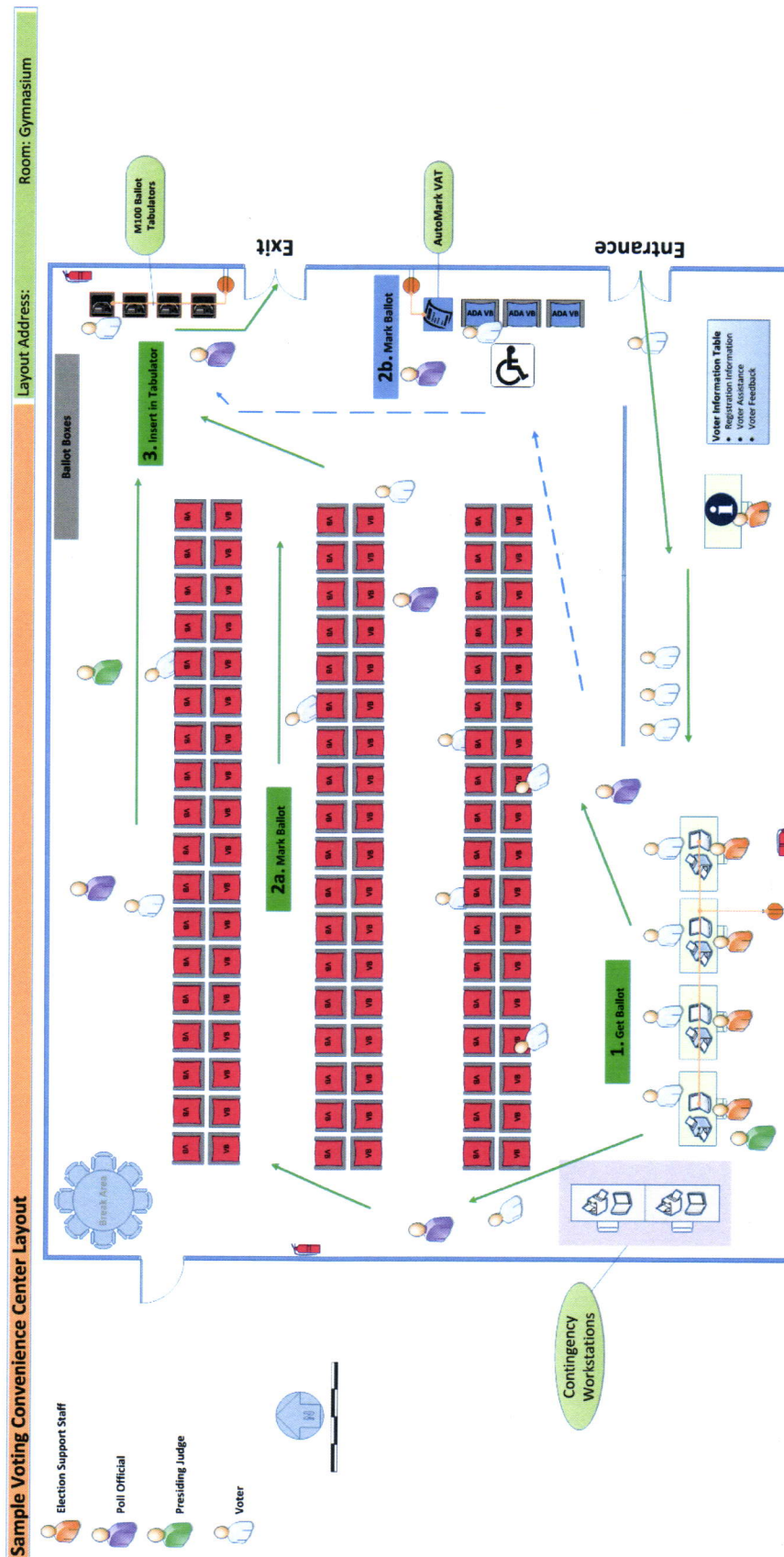


ii. Transit Proximity Map

10/21/11




v. *Sample VCC Layout*



vi. *Google Maps Voter Information Tool Sample*

Clerk's Annex
Updated 4 minutes ago



620 Lomas Blvd NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

[See video of voting traffic](#)
[Check my Voter Registration](#)

Early Voting Location
Monday - Saturday, 8am - 8pm until May 30, 2011

Election Day Voting Convenience Center
Hours of Operation: 7 am - 7 pm

More Voting Info: www.bernco.gov/clerk
505-468-1290

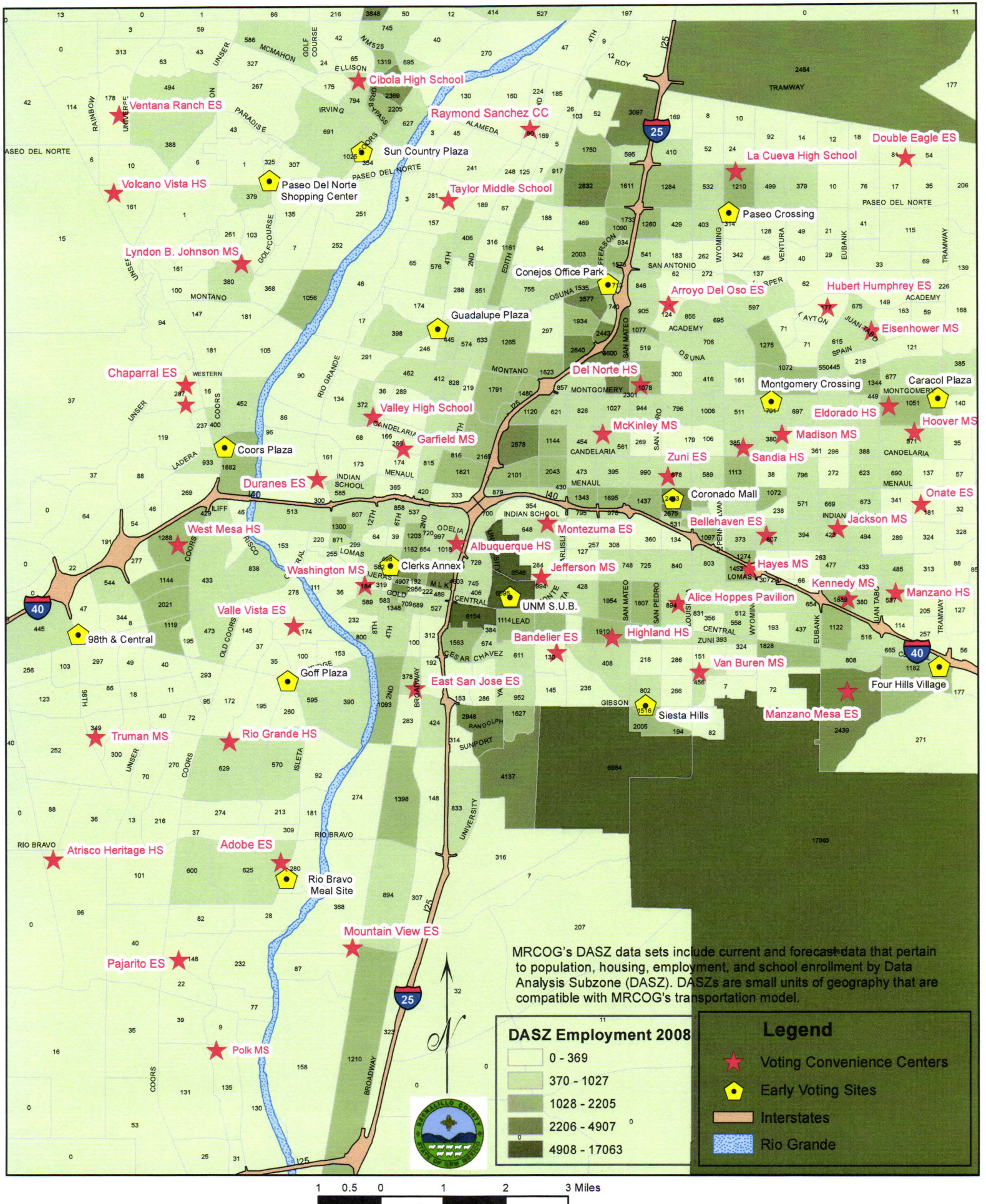
Accessible Transit Route(s): #36. [Plan my route.](#)

[Search nearby](#) [Save to map](#) [more ▼](#)

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vii. Employment population

Fall 2011



viii. Quick Reference Guide (1 of 2)

Quick Reference Guide

Voting Convenience Center (VCC)

What is a Voting Convenience Center?

A Voting Convenience Center (VCC) is an Election Day polling location that is available to any registered voter in the county.

VCCs in Practice

- The Vote Center model was first implemented in 2003 at Larimer County, Colorado.
- Early success of the Colorado VCC model led other jurisdictions to consider its advantages over the traditional model. At least 7 states or counties have piloted a VCC concept.
- In New Mexico, Senate Bill 337, passed by the 2011 Legislature and signed by Governor Martinez, provides County Clerks the option to utilize Voting Convenience Centers in future elections.
- SB 337 requires each consolidation to consist of no more than 10 regular precincts.

Proposed VCC Locations


- Comprehensive site and location criteria was used to develop proposed VCCs. Displayed below is the amount of VCCs selected:

	Urban Area	Rural Area	Early Voting Overlay	Total VCCs
VCC sites	43	5	17	65

- Majority of proposed locations are Albuquerque Public Schools which offer:
 - Traditional Election Day voting
 - Even distribution across Bernalillo County
 - Adequate space needed and parking accommodations
 - Well known locations, generally accessible
 - Minimal usage fees, if any
- * See list of proposed voting sites for more details

Benefits of VCCs

- Convenience to the Voter
 - 98% of County registered voters have access to at least one VCC within a 3 mile travel distance.
 - Proposed sites meet high standards of community visibility and multimodal accessibility.
 - Centrally located sites have ample parking and voting space.
- Easier to find and allows voters multiple choices of when and where to vote on Election Day.
- Reduces provisional balloting for voters who go to the wrong precinct.
- VCCs will have larger, better trained staff to assist throughout the voting process.
- Absentee ballots submitted on Election Day will now be accepted at any voting site.
- Real-time reporting to media, campaigns/parties and public.
- Reduces cost of administering elections.
- Studies show an increase in voter turnout



For more information, please contact the County Clerk's Bureau of Elections by calling 468-1291, emailing clerk@bernco.gov or visiting www.bernco.gov/clerk.

Quick Reference Guide (2 of 2)

